Location and Contact Information

Coram Experimental Forest is jointly administered and managed by the USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) and the Hungry Horse Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest in Montana.

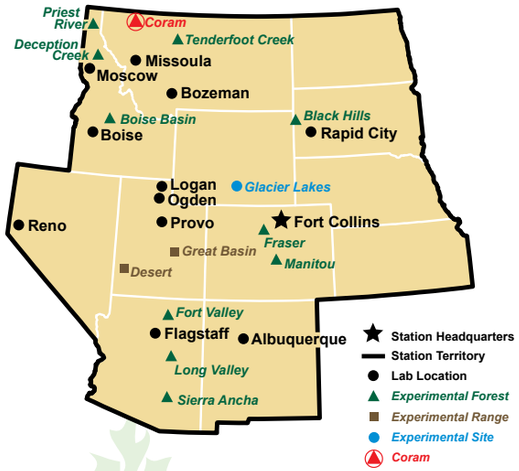
To reach Coram headquarters from Kalispell, Montana, take Highway 2 north and east for about 23 miles to Hungry Horse, Montana. The headquarters facilities are located at the Hungry Horse Ranger District. To reach Coram Experimental Forest, continue east on Highway 2 to Martin City and then take Central Avenue/South Fork Road east. Turn right on Forest Road 38 (South Fork Road) and then make a quick left onto Forest Road 497 to enter Coram Experimental Forest. The main entrance is about two miles from Martin City.

For more information:

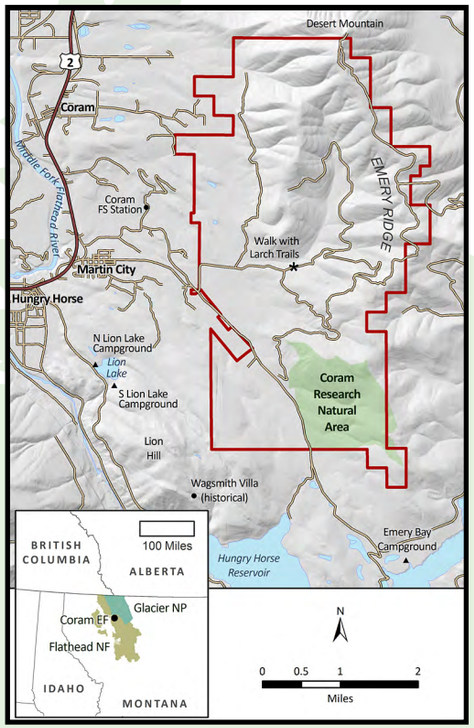
Rocky Mountain Research Station
Forestry Sciences Laboratory
800 E. Beckwith Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 542-4169
www.fs.fed.us/rmrs

Hungry Horse Ranger District
10 Hungry Horse Dr.
Hungry Horse, MT 59919
(406) 387-3800
www.fs.usda.gov/flathead

Map of the Rocky Mountain Research Station



Map of Coram Experimental Forest



Rocky Mountain Research Station

The Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) is one of seven units within U.S. Forest Service Research and Development. RMRS maintains 12 field laboratories throughout a 12-state territory encompassing parts of the Great Basin, Southwest, Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains.

RMRS administers and conducts research on 14 Experimental Forests and Ranges (EF&R) in seven states. The U.S. Forest Service's EF&R network represents many of the ecosystem types found in the United States and Puerto Rico. Most EF&Rs contain significant acreage and many encompass large experimental study sites that are used to examine the effects of operational-scale treatments such as prescribed burning and forest thinning. RMRS also oversees activities on several hundred Research Natural Areas, which have been set aside to conduct research while conserving biological diversity.

For more information:

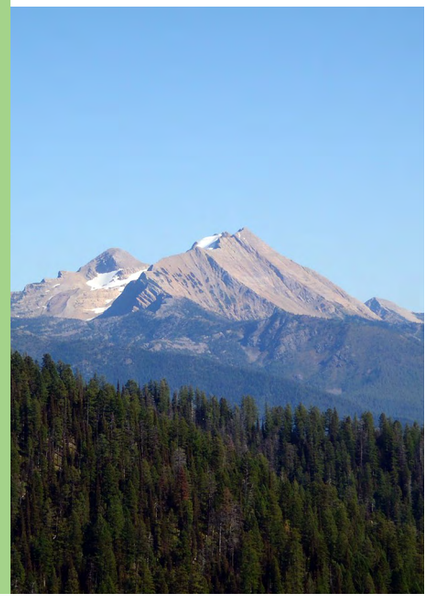
Rocky Mountain Research Station
240 West Prospect Road
Fort Collins, CO 80526-2098
970-498-1100

www.fs.fed.us/rmrs
www.twitter.com/usfs_rmrs/

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Coram Experimental Forest

A site for long–term western larch and forest–based research in the Northern Rockies



Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station

An Outdoor Laboratory in Northwestern Montana

Tucked away on the Flathead National Forest in northwestern Montana is a 7,460–acre outdoor research laboratory known as the Coram Experimental Forest. Coram is a component of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, which includes Glacier National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park (Canada), the Flathead National Forest and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. For more than 60 years, Coram Experimental Forest has been used by scientists for research, education and conservation, as well as by hikers, hunters, horseback riders and huckleberrypickers. A beautiful site featuring meadows and centuries–old trees, Coram Experimental Forest is one of more than 80 U.S. Forest Service sites that are set aside for research.

Coram Experimental Forest was designated as a protected research area in 1933, but the Great Depression and World War II delayed research until the late 1940s. The initial research goal for the forest was to find the best ways to harvest and regrow trees – especially western larch – for timber production. Research at the site has expanded to include studies about prescribed fire, soils, insect infestations, bird habitats, native plant restoration, and road–building practices.

The Western Larch: an Iconic American Tree

Native to North America, the western larch can be found in eastern Washington and Oregon, western Montana, northern Idaho, and British Columbia, Canada. Unlike most other cone–bearing trees, western larch trees lose their needles in the fall after turning a golden yellow–orange. In early spring, the new needles are a brilliant pale green. Western larch trees can grow to over 180 feet in height and live for more than 800 years, serving as homes for bald eagles, goshawks and flying squirrels. Larches are straight, sturdy and decay–resistant and their wood is fine–grained, making it well–suited for a variety of wood products.

The western larch has another important characteristic: its thick bark and lack of lower branches make it the most fire–resistant tree type in the Pacific Northwest. After fire, their seeds thrive on fire–blackened soil. Research at Coram Experimental Forest, which includes western larches that are more than 500 years old, has helped scientists and land managers learn how to grow and regenerate this important species, helping to strengthen northwestern U.S. forests and restore their health after fire.

Ongoing Research at the Forest

Studies related to tree stand density, logging debris removal, weather conditions and water flow have been conducted at the forest for more than 40 years. Databases from these studies are available to support research on forest management as well as a range of other studies, from insect and disease to climate change.

Please Be Considerate

Because it's important for studies to have forests that develop in a natural and untouched way, there are only a few roads and trails in Coram Experimental Forest. Camping, campfires and target–shooting are all prohibited. To protect the longevity of the research here – and to avoid disturbing the grizzly bears – please stay on designated roads and trails and be respectful of any field equipment or markers.

Features and Facilities

The forest includes a 1.5–mile "Walk With Larch" interpretive trail and the 838–acre Coram Research National Area, which was set aside in 1938 to protect an area with old–growth western larches and Douglas fir trees. Onsite research facilities include two weather stations and two flumes for measuring streamflow. Visitors can also view 10 different larch species at the International Larix Arboretum at the Hungry Horse Ranger District Station. These areas are all available for use as outdoor classrooms by students, as well as for visiting land managers.

The Coram Experimental Forest headquarters consist of two houses with offices and sleeping quarters. These buildings, which were built in the late 1940s by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, are available for use by researchers and research collaborators. Inquiries are welcome. Contact information for Coram Experimental Forest can be found at www.fs.fed.us/rm/coram.

Western larch trees turn a brilliant yellow–orange during the fall season.